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The President's Daily Brief

25X1

1 August 1972

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~~Top Secret~~
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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

1 August 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Vietnam, heavy fighting continues on the northern battlefronts. South Vietnamese Marines are battling enemy units inside Quang Tri City and to the north and east. *(Page 1)*

The South Vietnamese are preparing contingency plans for a cease-fire. *(Page 2)*

The publication of a joint editorial by China's three leading journals, the first of its kind in many months, suggests that at least some progress has been made toward resolving problems connected with the purge of Lin Piao. *(Page 3)*

The Soviets [redacted] Eastern Europe. *(Page 4)* 25X1

Warsaw Pact leaders met yesterday in what appears to have been a hastily arranged session to discuss Middle East developments. *(Page 5)*

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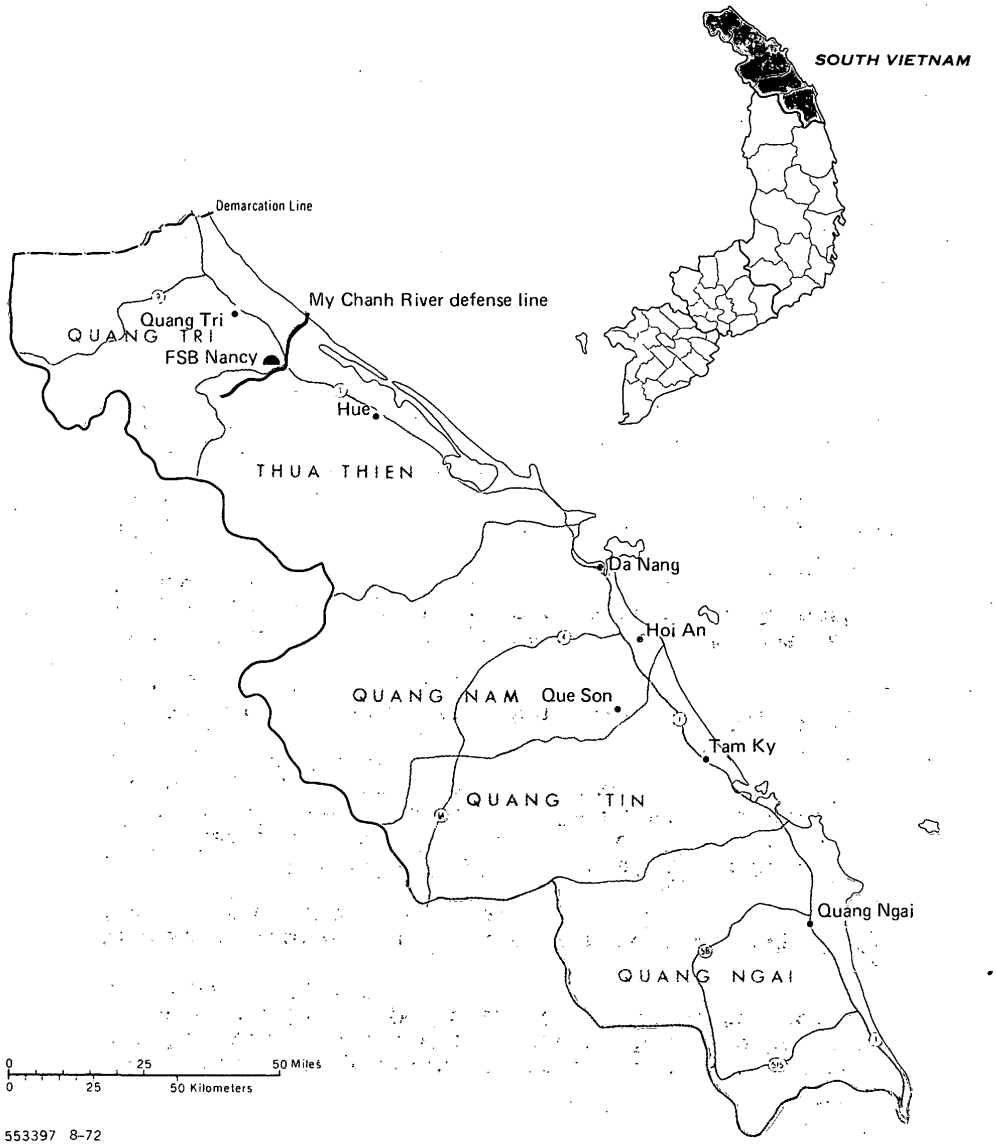

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VIETNAM

Heavy fighting continues on the northern battlefronts. South Vietnamese Marines are battling enemy units inside Quang Tri City and to the north and east. To the south, at least two regiments of the North Vietnamese 304th Division are attacking airborne positions west of Route 1 and are shelling other government positions in the area. The Communists presumably hope to cut Route 1 near Fire Support Base Nancy.

Farther south in Thua Thien Province, units of North Vietnam's 324B Division are attempting to push past South Vietnamese 1st Division forces southwest of Hue. The enemy may be trying to get into the lowlands in preparation for a major assault against Hue sometime soon.

Several pitched battles are under way in northern Binh Dinh Province, where strong resistance to the government's counteroffensive has developed. Both sides are sustaining heavy casualties in a see-saw contest.

In the southern half of the country, enemy activity has been at a low level, with most action in Tay Ninh Province. Early this morning, however, Bien Hoa air base northeast of Saigon was hit with 60 artillery and mortar rounds, the first major attack on this installation in more than a year.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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The US Embassy in Saigon has recently obtained a copy of a secret South Vietnamese contingency plan for Military Region 3 in the event of a cease-fire. The plan deals with the situation and missions of "military and armed civilian forces" in the periods just before and after a cease-fire. It assumes that North Vietnamese forces will remain in place in the south and that a quasi-military form of "political warfare" will continue even after the cease-fire goes into effect. The plan calls for the government, among other things, to take "discreet" measures to assassinate and kidnap Communist cadres and to use the various resources at its command during the cease-fire, including the army if necessary, to expand the areas under its control.

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It is becoming clear that this year's enemy offensive, summit diplomacy, the resumption of the Paris talks, and the US election campaign are stimulating cease-fire talk and contingency preparations by both the government and the Communists.

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CHINA

On the occasion of Army Day, China's three leading journals have issued a joint editorial, the first of its kind in many months. The regime's decision to publish such an editorial now, after letting several appropriate occasions pass without comment, suggests that the leadership has made at least some progress toward resolving problems connected with the purge of Defense Minister Lin Piao.

The editorial appears to exonerate the Chinese armed forces from blame for the Lin affair. Ever since the Lin purge, the army has been subjected to a propaganda campaign calling on it to place itself under firm party control. The new editorial, however, states flatly that the military is "loyal to the party and the people" and that it is unified. It also declares that any conspirator who wanted to undermine the army--a clear reference to Lin--would be "only daydreaming."

Although Peking has recently confirmed to foreigners the story that has been circulating since last October about Lin's attempted coup against Mao and his subsequent abortive flight to the Soviet Union, Lin is not mentioned by name in the editorial. Peking, by endorsing this account, may have hoped to take some wind out of the sails of the Nationalist Chinese, who have themselves been publicizing the story in a number of foreign capitals recently, while avoiding the embarrassment that would accompany any denunciation of Lin by name in the official press. Even this step, however, required a decision at the highest levels, and suggests that the regime is attempting to tie up loose ends relating to the purge and to project an image of public unity.

Peking, however, still has not provided answers to several questions concerning army-party relations. It has not, for example, identified former marshal Yeh Chien-ying as Lin's successor in the post of defense minister, despite reports circulating in China that this would occur on Army Day. Nor has it filled a number of other important military and civilian posts that have been vacant for a long time. Thus it appears that the personnel and policy issues that have been in dispute among the leadership are yet to be fully resolved.

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USSR - EASTERN EUROPE

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NOTES

USSR - Warsaw Pact: Leaders of Warsaw Pact countries, plus Mongolia, met in the Crimea yesterday in what appears to have been a hastily arranged session. Moscow announced that the foreign leaders were on "a brief rest," but only Czechoslovakia's Husak was known to have been vacationing in the Soviet Union. We believe that a principal topic of the meeting was the expulsion of Soviet advisers from Egypt, together with advice to Pact members on their relations with the Arab states.

Syria-USSR: Satellite photography shows enough SA-3 canisters and launchers at the Hims SAM-support facility in western Syria to equip two SA-3 sites. SA-3 equipment was scheduled to arrive in Syria early this summer, and this is the first photography of such equipment there.

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